

Equality and Diversity Steering Group Update

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

For further information about this report please contact Paul Raymond, Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260205 or Natalie Parkinson, Equality and Diversity Officer, on 01743 260236.

1 Purpose of Report

This report provides the Committee with a summary report on the work of the Equality and Diversity Steering Group from August 2011 to 1 September 2012.

2 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the contents of the report.

3 Background

The remit of the Equality and Diversity Steering Group is:

- To improve the services the Authority provides to the wider Shropshire community
- To promote community cohesion and anti-discrimination with people living and working in Shropshire, including issues of rural access, social isolation and income inequality
- To initiate, facilitate and monitor projects to improve the wellbeing of the Authority's employees
- To promote excellence in equality and diversity practice throughout the organisation
- To maintain organisational focus and ensure strategic priorities for Equality and Diversity in the organisation and the communities the Authority serves

- To ensure that the Service's culture encourages employees and service users to be valued and accepted as individuals
- To provide leadership, strategic direction, development and resources to ensure progression of our Equality Framework and Single Equality Scheme.

4 Main Areas of Work

The work of the Steering Group has made good progress since August 2011 on enabling implementation of actions in the new Single Equality Action Plan.

The main areas of Steering Group work during this period are summarised below.

- The Single Equality Action Plan has been monitored for progress and its content and priorities have been reviewed in light of its effectiveness in delivering Equality and Diversity outcomes; 18 actions have been completed during this period with many more in progress.
- The three-year Equality Impact Assessment Plan has continued to be monitored. Individual departments have reviewed, edited and prioritised their outstanding assessments and relevant parts of the Transformation Programme have been assessed. Thirteen assessments have been completed during this period. These do not include those related to project work, for example, assessments have been completed on Wellington partial refurbishment, Bring Your Daughters to Work Day, Gypsy and Traveller Training and Fitness Testing
- The Steering Group has authorised membership to the 'Age Action Alliance Group' in October 2011.
- 'Bring Your Daughters to Work Day' took place on 6 June 2012 with fourteen participants (see the appendix to this report for evaluation of the event).
- The Group receives regular updates on Hate Crime statistics in Shropshire through the Equalities Forum, Hate Crime Sub Group.
- The Group agreed to run positive action events for Retained Duty System personnel, which are currently being devised.
- A peer audit for excellence of the 'Service Delivery and Community Engagement' element of the Fire Service Equality Framework was undertaken in March 2012.

- The Group continues to plan, administer and deliver training and information, including Gypsy and Traveller Awareness Training, Equality and Diversity staff catch-up training, Cultural Awareness and Harassment and Bullying induction training, and a briefing on The Equality Act 2010 to Members of the Fire Authority.
- Managers and Members have received Equality Act Guidance documents.
- A survey about levels of satisfaction with public services for those of the community, who are Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual (LGB), is now in progress with feedback provided to the Steering Group. This has been carried out in partnership with Shropshire Council, Shropshire Primary Care Trust, Rights and Fairness Telford, Telford & Wrekin Council, Victim Support, Citizens Advice, Shropshire LGB Network, housing agencies and other agencies.
- Information on Holocaust Memorial Day for January 2012 was distributed throughout the Service and a display was put up in 99 Dine. The Equality and Diversity Officer was part of the joint working group for the Equalities Forum and Shropshire Council Event, which was represented by Assistant Chief Fire Officer Steve Worrall.
- The Group supported a news feature shown in January 2012 by BBC Midlands News, featuring a retained firefighter and our approach to work on dyslexia.
- The Group continues to deal with membership subscriptions and funding requests, including a small contribution to the Rainbow Film Festival, Networking Women in the Fire Service, Shropshire Equalities Forum, Stonewall and the Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA).
- The Group supported the 'White Ribbon Campaign' in November 2010, which is aimed at not condoning violence towards women and showing support. A watch from Telford was involved in a photo shoot, supporting this event.
- Members of the Group attended the following events:
 - 14 October 2011 Rainbow Film Festival Launch
 - 27 January 2012 Holocaust Memorial Day Event
 - 26 May 2012 Dyslexia Information Day
 - 7 July 2012 Cultural Diversity Day
 - 10 September 2011 and 1 September 2012 Interfaith Fun Days

5 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

6 Legal Comment

The role of the Equality and Diversity Steering Group is to integrate equality, diversity and human rights' legislation and standards, across the whole of the Authority's activities, supporting achievement of the Authority's objectives, and to take action as appropriate in accordance with its statutory obligations.

7 Equality Impact Assessment

An Initial Equality Impact Assessment is not required as this report is an update report looking at historical information.

8 Appendix

'Bring Your Daughters to Work Day' Evaluation

9 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.